

Izydor Minc



This is my father Izydor Jozef Mintz. We spelled our name the same way, with a 'tz,' until the 1930s.

This picture was taken in 1925 or 1926, in Krynica, in front of the guesthouse where he was staying.

Jozef was my father's middle name, I don't know if it was on his birth certificate, but he was called Jozio not Izydor in the family, though his first name was Izydor.

My father was an engineer, specializing in electric technology. He graduated from Russkoye Realnoye Uchilishche in Warsaw.

After that he studied in Germany. He completed one faculty in Sachsen Anhalt, and then another, that is mechanics, he did in Charlottenburg, Berlin.

He spoke German very well, and he spoke French, and then later he taught himself English as well, in his mature years.

Why did he choose to study abroad? German technical universities had an excellent reputation.

And my father wanted to have the diploma of a polytechnic that really meant something in the world.

Anyway, in those times a degree in engineering was not what it is today, the position of an engineer was incomparably higher.

My father did his apprenticeship in the 'Lazarz' coal mine near Sosnowiec, and then another in the paper-works of prince Druckolubecki in the Smolensk province.

My father was very assimilated, non-believer, his whole family was quite polonized, assimilated, several generations back they had spoken only Polish, the children were sent to Polish schools...

How did my parents meet? That is a long story.

After my mother's oldest brother ran off to the United States, it was the grandfather, Maurycy Fajner, who supported the family.

He did trade in Lodz, but what he traded in I don't know exactly. So here was the situation: seven children, and two parents, and suddenly there is no income.

That was when my mother, who was 17 at the time (it was 1908), decided to set up a sewing workshop for women.

She got her sisters involved in this project, they had three sewing machines, and they supported the entire family.

My mother, being so brave and so smart, enjoyed great respect in the family.

And she also prepared her whole trousseau. Because she was working so hard, she would take her vacations in Ojcowo, near Cracow.

But then one year she went to Kazimierz on the Vistula, and this is where she met my father.

So this is where they met. And my father decided to move to Lodz for my mother's sake. He opened his electro-technical office there.

They got married on 18th March 1914.

My older brother, Wladek, Wladyslaw, was born on 26th January 1915. Soon after that the Russians left Lodz. My younger brother Ludwik, known as Lulek, was born on 27th March 1922.

And I was born in August 1920 in Lodz. I was born in the apartment building at 44 Kilinskiego Street, but at that time it was still called Widzewska.

My parents also owned a villa in Wisniowa Gora, about 15 km east of Lodz. I spent my childhood with my parents.

We often traveled, because I was quite a sickly child, so my mother would take me to health resorts more often than the other boys.

To Ciechocinek for instance. My brothers were stronger than I was. But later I grew to be strong as well.

Thanks to sports I got to be no worse than the others.

We kept on living at Kilinskiego 44 until 1936. Afterwards, for a brief while, my father rented an apartment at number 1 Glowna Street, but we basically moved into our villa in Wisniowa Gora.

On Kilinskiego Street we paid very high rent: 133 zloty per month. That was quite a lot.

As long as my father earned a full income, this high rent was not such a big problem.

But then it became a real burden for him. And since he didn't like to get behind on the rent, we had to get rid of this apartment.